



Written by [D. Michael DeRidder](#) on November 4, 2025

White House Drops Deep State Nominee Joel Rayburn

On October 27, the White House [withdrew](#) Joel Rayburn's nomination to serve as assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern affairs, overseeing Middle East policy. The withdrawal comes after the [nomination advanced through](#) the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on a bipartisan 15-7 vote last week.

Rayburn, a retired Army officer, served as a special envoy for Syria during the first Trump administration, where he worked under James Jeffrey, a special representative for Syria engagement. Rayburn's nomination stalled due to scrutiny over his association with Jeffrey, a ["never Trumper"](#) who openly bragged in a 2020 [Defense One interview](#) that, "We were always playing shell games to not make clear to our leadership how many troops we had there." Defying the president's order to withdraw from Syria, Jeffrey and others intentionally misled Trump administration leaders about the number of U.S. military personnel in Syria.



AP Images

Sen. Rand Paul led the opposition to Joel Rayburn's nomination

Opposition

Leading the opposition to the nomination was Senator Rand Paul (R-Ky.), who questioned Rayburn during the hearing, raising concerns about his association with Jeffrey and whether he could be trusted to follow orders. As Jeffrey's actions directly defied President Trump's explicit commands, Paul stating during the hearing, "I think what James Jeffrey did was tantamount to treason, basically." After receiving notice of the nomination's withdrawal, Paul [reiterated his doubts, stating](#), "I had my doubts whether he would actually obey orders."

Doubts regarding Rayburn's and Jeffrey's loyalty are warranted, given that both are members of the [Council on Foreign Relations](#) (CFR), a globalist-minded organization with a [history of exerting influence](#) on presidential administrations. Unelected officials such as Jeffrey and Rayburn, who ostensibly served under President Trump, undermined [Article II of the Constitution](#), which vests military command in the president.

Americans continue to reject endless foreign wars. Rayburn's nomination being withdrawn is a small victory over the Deep State's grip on U.S. foreign policy, and one step closer to draining the globalist swamp.



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